

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

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POETRY ABOUT THOREAU: 19th CENTURY

by Robert F. Stowell

Probably more poetry has been written about Thoreau and his way of life than about any other English or American writer. Why? How many of the more than three hundred poems would Thoreau himself consider worthwhile?

The unique quality of Thoreau's search for meaning and his attempt to live his life according to principle are the themes which have interested the majority of those writing about Thoreau. The quality of the writing in Walden has also attracted some poets. In looking through bibliographies to locate poems for this study, I was impressed by the range of magazines with some interest in Thoreau. Well represented in "general" and literary journals, articles about Thoreau are found in magazines mainly concerned with such diverse subjects as mountain climbing, conservation, nudism, philology, vegetarianism, ethics, humanism, political philosophy, conscientious objection, surveying and bird watching. Thoreau remains difficult to pigeon-hole; his complexity as well as his independence of thought have been both a challenge and an obstacle to those writing poems about him.

Few of the 19th Century poems comment on his protest against slavery or his night in jail for tax refusal whereas the "social protest" part of his life is more often a subject of poems in the 20th Century. Surprisingly few verse parodies have been written, considering the opportunities and there have been few humorous poems about Henry David.

There are some common reasons for the failure of the "bad" poetry about Thoreau. Mawkish sentimentality and excessive adulation are the most frequent faults, followed by a narrow understanding of Thoreau and a tendency to paraphrase from his own writing. Mediocre or dull expression was, of course, frequent as well.

Often the less successful poems use Thoreau merely as a convenient point of departure for writing vaguely about Nature; the birds and flowers have only a tangential relation to Thoreau. At its worst the poet (or poetess) sweeps up to "Dear Henry" with a bouquet while trying to clutch his trouser leg. These poets wish to "trod with thee" in a manner that could only have sent Thoreau deeper into the woods.

Thoreau as caricatured from life
by W.H. Furness in Philadelphia,
November, 1854.



An example of this kind of "tribute" is worth describing before we move on to more serious work. Mrs. F. W. Gillette wrote "Henry D. Thoreau" in 1863 (Sophia Thoreau's Scrapbook, Geneseo, New York, 1964).

How, in thy heart, was sweet of
Bud, and bloom, of flower, and song of bird
And ripple of the brooks, and murmurs of
The summer breezes, and sounds of wintry winds....

Mrs. Gillette would like to "take Thoreau's hand" and sail on the Concord River in his "floating bark."

As we would expect, Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem "Forbearance" published in 1841 comes close to understanding Thoreau's strength and versatility. Emerson asks a series of rhetorical questions addressed to Thoreau and persuades the reader that Henry is personally present.

Hast thou named all the birds without
a gun?
Loved the wood-rose, and left it on
the stalk?
At rich men's tables eaten bread
and pulse?
Unarmed, faced danger with a
heart of trust?
And loved so well a high behavior,
In man and maid, that thou from
speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay?
O, be my friend, and teach me to
be thine!

Emerson's humility in asking to be "taught friendship" may surprise those of us who feel that he did not ask questions as often as he might; however the poem is a convincing and moving revelation of his early regard for Thoreau.

In the first section of another early poem, "Woodnotes", Emerson speaks of "a forest seer/ a minstrel of the natural year" who "knew by heart/ each joy the mountain dales impart." He shows Thoreau as one who knew what was happening outdoors, someone who blended into the natural surroundings as though "the breezes brought him" and "the sparrows taught him."

Perhaps the best known poem about Thoreau by a contemporary is James Russell Lowell's stanza in 1848 from "A Fable For Critics." Given Thoreau's below average height and the reference to orchards which suits to well the fact that he pruned

Emerson's fruit trees, Thoreau seems the logical choice to fill the first blank in the poem.

There comes -----, for instance; to see him's
rare sport,
Tread in Emerson's track with legs painfully short;
How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the
face,
To keep step with the mystagogue's pace!
He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,
His fingers exploring the prophet's each pocket.
Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit
of your own,
Can't you let Neighbor Emerson's orchards alone?
Besides, 'tis no use, You'll not find e'en a core, -
----- has picked up all the windfalls before.

Lowell had written that "It is exquisitely amusing to see how he (Thoreau) imitates Emerson's tone and manner. With my eyes shut I shouldn't know them apart." (James Russell Lowell, M. Duberman. Boston, 1966. p. 25.)

Remembering William Ellery Channing's friendship with Thoreau and their many excursions together, perhaps the reader today can be "sympathetic" if not convinced by Channing's "sobbing breeze" in the poem he wrote to be "sung" at Thoreau's funeral on May 9, 1862. Thoreau certainly related behavior as observed in nature to human behavior (for example, the battle of the ants in Walden), but it is difficult to find Thoreau being sentimental or ascribing human emotions to inanimate nature. Channing's view lacks toughness; he writes too often of "green solitudes" and "old contented rocks."

This view is evident in the sentence that precedes his "Walden Hermitage" in Thoreau, Poet-Naturalist. "After our dear lover of Nature had retired from Walden, a rustic rhymers (Channing!) hung up on the walls of the deserted sanctuary some irregular verses as an interpretation." (page 207, 1902 edition). In an earlier poem "Walden," published in the second series of poems in 1847, the same year Thoreau left Walden Pond, Channing lacks the misplaced reverence of the later verse and speaks more simply and directly. He refers to the "tranquil loveliness" where Thoreau built his hermitage, and the second stanza begins with an image that Thoreau probably liked.

More fitting place I cannot fancy now
For such a man to let the line run off
This mortal reel, such patience hath the lake,
Such gratitude and cheer is in the pines.

In "Baker Farm" Channing writes "Simpleness is all thy teaching;/ Idleness is all the preaching,/ Churches are these steepled woods...." but much of the poem is heavy going. "Walden Hermitage" has these lines in which, like Emerson, Channing asks questions.

You ask me for the man. Hand yesterday
Or to-morrow, or a star from the sky:
More mine are they than he;
But that he lived, I tell thee.

Another of Thoreau's friends, Daniel Ricketson of New Bedford, wrote a twelve stanza poem published in The Autumn Sheaf, 1869. Exigencies of rhyme led him to have Thoreau's cabin "rear its head" for there "thought and study wed." Ricketson has his friend build a "simple dome" which two lines later is

found to be "his humble home." He hopes that from Thoreau's example others may escape the "ills of life", and he seems to regard Henry as primarily a "transcendental" naturalist. "Nature ever keeps an open door,/ and bids a welcome to the good and wise." At least Ricketson is prophetic in believing that Walden and Concord will become "classic ground."

One of the few poems by friends of Thoreau to mention social protest was by Bronson Alcott and quoted in F. B. Sanborn's Henry D. Thoreau, 1882. Alcott denies those critics who thought Thoreau morose and cynical, saying that Thoreau's friends know better. He speaks of Thoreau as "friendship's all-adventuring pioneer," and praises him for his stand against slavery and his defense of John Brown.

Fifteen years younger than Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott wrote a largely un-sentimental poem that has an elegiac quality. The poem, "Thoreau's Flute," was published in the Atlantic Monthly, September, 1863. Using his music as a metaphor, she creates successfully her feeling of Thoreau's spirit in the flute's "low harmonious breath." True, she does have bluebirds "chanting requiems" and "wistful moonbeams" quiver at his death, but also "the wisdom of a just content/made one small spot a continent,/ and turned to poetry life's prose." She also refers to Thoreau as a "large-hearted child" and says that now "our Pan is dead," nature will "write his name in violets." She convinces us that the music of Thoreau's flute lingers on.

Steadfast, sagacious and serene;
Seek not for him--he is with thee.

An interesting poem called "Walden" was published in 1863 in the Boston Commonwealth by John Dorgan. Like Bronson Alcott, he maintains that Thoreau was no misanthrope. Thoreau taught us not to waste our lives in "Too much of brainless toil to heartless ends;/ Too little of leisure for Nature and ourselves." Thoreau lived "Not rich, but free from care; devoid of fear,/ Who dared the mockery of the world alone." Thoreau, for Dorgan, "loathed hollow forms" and he finds him "not generous; too liberal with his life."

Storrow Higginson attended Sanborn's school and knew Thoreau from his occasional visits. He published a poem called "Henry D. Thoreau" in Harvard Magazine, May, 1862. Nature mourns for her darling child and the purple martin screamed aloud to announce Thoreau's death. The sparrow is quiet out of sympathy, and the gentle finch broods thoughtfully. Higginson sees Thoreau's "pure life" as "one long unceasing prayer to Him/ Who of his wondrous majesty created all..." The entire poem is clearly more about the poet than about Thoreau.

One other poem by a contemporary of Thoreau is worth mentioning. John Weiss, a Harvard classmate, wrote "Poem Read at the Annual Dinner of the Class of 1837" (published in Boston in 1874.) Weiss takes a mildly pantheistic stance, and we see in Thoreau "the heart of oak" and "all creatures with him start....all things rejoice, since death is only feign'd" (Thoreau Society Bulletin, No. 21, October, 1947).

William Butler Yeats, the last of the 19th Century poets to be considered here, establishes the pattern for many of the 20th Century poems about Thoreau. Writing in 1915 in Reveries Over Childhood and Youth the poet notes "My father had read me some passages out of Walden, and I planned to live some day in a cottage on a little island

called Innisfree...." Yeats' poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," was published in 1890 when he was twenty-five. He is able to fuse what Walden meant for him with his own longings, capturing with restraint a magical vision of what a life of serene simplicity could be. At the same time, Yeats does not ignore the possibility that for him it will remain a dream; there is more than a hint of Yeats making fun of himself and Thoreau in the way he repeats the injunction to action.

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

Personal and direct, Yeats makes the reader aware that he understands Thoreau and at the same time that the "grey pavements" also have their hold on Yeats even as he listens to the "deep heart's core."

The best poems about Thoreau have used fresh imagery to blend the quality of Thoreau's own life-long search for meaning with the poet's own reflections and perceptions. Nature often enters the better poems as a reinforcement rather than as a starting point for the poet. Many excellent poems have been written about Thoreau in the 20th Century. Possibly knowing Thoreau only through his writing has been an advantage.

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THE 1970 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1970 annual meeting of the Thoreau Society was held in the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord, Mass., on Saturday, July 11. The meeting was called to order and chaired by Vice-president Robert Needham in the absence of the President, Charles Anderson, who was in England. Mr. James Collins, Chairman of the Concord Board of Selectmen, brought greetings from the town and Malcolm Ferguson, President of the Thoreau Lyceum, brought greetings from the Lyceum. The minutes of the 1969 meeting were accepted as printed in the Summer, 1969, BULLETIN. The following treasurer's report was presented and accepted:

Balance on Hand, June 12, 1969	\$6,319*
Expenditures	
Annual meeting	488
Postage and mailing	436
Printing	315
Award to C. Chavez	500
Allocated to Thoreau travel scholarship	1,000
Misc.	397
Receipts	
Dues	1,106
Sales of back copies	167
Life memberships	300
Royalties	44
Gifts	3
Balance on Hand, June 3, 1970	\$4,798
(*Figures rounded off for convenience.)	

It was voted that a fund of \$500 be established in honor of Mrs. Ruth Wheeler for her many labors on behalf of Thoreau scholarship, her writings on

Concord history, and her services as an officer and member of the executive committee of the Thoreau Society, the fund to be devoted to the improvement of the Thoreau Society Archives in the Concord Free Public Library and to be expended under the direction of Mrs. Wheeler.

The executive committee was empowered to change the wording of the by-laws of the Thoreau Society in so far as it might be necessary to obtain a tax-exempt status for the society. It was also pointed out that such a tax-exempt status would preclude the society's participation in political activities.

The executive committee announced the appointment of a committee consisting of Mrs. Ruth Wheeler, Roland Robbins, and Walter Harding to investigate the possibility of issuing a booklet printing some of Thoreau's survey maps now in the Concord Free Public Library.

It was voted that in the event of the dissolution of the Thoreau Society (not that such an event is contemplated in the near future) that the assets of the society should then be assigned to the Concord Free Public Library.

A series of resolutions were presented by Professor Charles W. White of Southeastern Massachusetts University condemning United States intervention in Southeast Asia, condemning our elected officials in Washington for tolerating continued persecution of Black Americans, and protesting the continued destruction of our environment. These resolutions were ruled out of order by the chairman and were referred to the executive committee.

Upon recommendation of the nominating committee (Carl Bode, Roland Robbins, and Mrs. Ruth Wheeler, chairman) the following slate of officers--Albert Bussewitz, president; Leonard Kleinfeld, president-elect; Robert Needham, vice-president; and Walter Harding, secretary-treasurer--all for terms of one year--and Mrs. Mary Fenn and Samuel Wellman, members of the executive committee for three years was elected.

Vladimir Munoz of Montevideo, Uruguay, was introduced to the society by Leonard Kleinfeld. Mr. Munoz, South America's greatest enthusiast for Thoreau, was the recipient of a scholarship voted at the 1969 annual meeting providing him transportation to the annual meeting. Arrangements for his transportation were worked out by Leonard Kleinfeld. Mr. Munoz was presented a special bronze plaque commemorating his trip and donated by Samuel Wellman. The United States Information Service sent news photographers to cover the meeting and their films will be broadcast over television in Uruguay.

The speaker of the day was Dean Carl Swanson of Johns Hopkins University who gave a very stimulating address on Thoreau's pertinence today. The presidential address on "Miniatures from Thoreau's Journals" was read by Walter Harding in the absence of the president.

Luncheon was served at noon in Monument Hall and it was followed by the usual question and answer forum chaired by Walter Harding. In the afternoon Mrs. Edmund Fenn conducted a walk to Bateman's Pond, Robert Needham conducted a tour of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Mrs. Ruth Wheeler led a group to Fair Haven Cliff, and Leonard Kleinfeld conducted a seminar at the First Parish Church. Special exhibits were arranged by the Concord Free Public Library, The Concord Antiquarian Society, and the Thoreau Lyceum. A box supper was served at the Thoreau Lyceum.

The evening meeting, at the First Parish Church, opened with a moving tribute to the late Gladys Hosmer by Roland Robbins. It was followed by a lecture by Frank Bramley entitled "Walks with Thoreau" illustrated by slides and the playing of the recording "Sounds of Concord." The meeting closed with the acceptance of the president's gavel by the new president Albert Bussewitz.

[Note: The White resolutions, as might be expected, provoked a great deal of discussion during and after the meeting. We hope in a forthcoming issue of the bulletin to have some of the varying viewpoints on the matter presented.]

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- Wood, James Playsted. THE PEOPLE OF CONCORD. Drawings by Richard Cuffari. New York: Seabury, 1970. 152pp. \$4.95. A very pleasant little history of Concord written for young people and with a particular emphasis on Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott and Hawthorne. A good brief introduction to the town and its more famous people.

Worsnop, Richard L. "The World of Thoreau," TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL. July 13, 1970.

Young, Alan K. "Ponsonby and the Dying Words," ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, August, 1970, pp. 40-56. A clever little mystery story where a murder is solved through knowing Thoreau's last words.

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: H. Adel, R. Borst, T. Bailey, R. Centing, M. Campbell, P. Dexter, J. Donovan, R. Epler, F. Flack, M. G. Fenn, D. Finley, E. Flood, R. Ganley, M. Goering, D. Hannan, D. Harrison, C. Hoagland, G. Hasenauer, A. Kovar, L. Kleinfeld, D. Kamen-Kaye, J. Lawrence, R. LeMaitre, W. Moiles, J. Morine, M. Moss, A. McGrath, M. Matera, D. McWilliams, M. Manning, R. Poland, M. Rowse, W. Ralls, R. Schofield, W. Spofford, R. Stowell, D. Stoddard, R. Schaedle, W. Sutton, E. Teale, H. Van Fleet, J. Vickers, M. Wahl, S. Wellman, P. Williams, W. Wolf, and J. Zuithoff. Please keep the secretary informed of Thoreau items he has missed and new items as they appear.

REPORT FROM THE CONCORD WALKING SOCIETY: THE KIBBE PLACE by Mary Fenn

The Concord Walking Society has been making a study of the actual locations of some of the places Thoreau mentions in the Journals. In some cases he was most specific and they are easy to find, but in others the directions are vague or confusing. Even the Gleason map, which on the whole is tremendously helpful, is sometimes inaccurate or omits particularly choice spots. One of these is Yellow Birch Cellar Hole for which we have so far searched in vain.

The Kibbe Place, somewhere in the woods near the Carlisle end of the Old Carlisle Road, was a cellar hole in Thoreau's day. We don't know much about Kibbe himself except that he weighed 250 pounds and had five daughters who were so large that when they went to the Concord Meetinghouse they had to take turns riding the horse, as one at a time was all it could carry. (Journal, Sept. 21, 1851).

At the time when Carlisle broke off from Concord, the proposed town bounds were run from the Old Carlisle Road to the river. However, certain farmers who found themselves in the Carlisle area preferred to live in Concord, in which case the line detoured to include their farm in the town of their choice. The Kibbe Place was too far north of the line to be included in a jog - so the obliging town fathers simply specified that it was in Concord and that was that. That is why on old maps, the Kibbe Place appears as an island belonging to Concord though completely surrounded by Carlisle. In time the few farms in the area were abandoned, and the town line was straightened.

But where was the Kibbe Place? Of course it would be beyond a break in the stone wall running along the Old Carlisle Road, but there were several such breaks. According to the Gleason map, it was near the road - but none of the indications of a farm area were there. Several people thought they knew its location, but few have the ability to give accurate directions in the woods. We searched again and again, until one day we followed a whisper of an old lane farther into the woods, dipping down through a swampy area, then climbing to higher land. Here we began to find the tell-tale signs of cleared fields: small rocks were piled on large boulders and sun loving Juniper bushes bespeaking a pasture still

struggled to live in the midst of the woods. At last in a thicket of gnarled old blueberry bushes we found a cellar hole, its stone foundation walls remarkably well preserved.

A beautiful spot it was too - far off in the woods with no sound to disturb the solitude but the wind in the pines and the calling of birds. A wooded knoll rose gently to the east, dropping off abruptly on the other side to the northern reaches of Yellow Birch Swamp. A path from the house, still well defined after all those years, led to the well. A road, barely visible except to one accustomed to the woods, led off to the south.

At last we had found the Kibbe Place, well worth our many fruitless trips, and now we were content. Well not quite. After all, there is that wood road running south - and it just might lead us to Yellow Birch Cellar Hole.

THOREAU SITES IN MASSACHUSETTS

John Blackwell, Chief Land Use Planner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Dept. of Natural Resources, State Office Bldg., 100 Cambridge St., Boston, Mass. 02202) makes the following request:

"This is a plea for aid by Thoreau Society members, especially Massachusetts members, in identifying during the remaining months of 1970 Thoreau-related landscape sites anywhere in Massachusetts.

With federal and state funds, we are making at federal suggestion a 1970 statewide outdoor recreation plan in a context of environmental conservation. One step is an inventory of each site in the Commonwealth one acre or larger already now "dedicated" to outdoor recreation and environmental conservation. Another step is to learn of additional sites to be considered for preservation. In that connection, I asked to alert Thoreau Society members at the 11 July 1970 annual meeting.

We hope members will notify in duplicate (by xerox perhaps) both this office and their local municipal conservation commission or park commission or historical society of the particular location and current land ownership of any scenic landscape site anywhere in Massachusetts that is importantly Thoreau-related, together with a sentence or so stating the specific "Thoreau-ness" of the site.

If possible please send a (xerox) print of some part of a town street map or U.S.G.S. map, clearly marked to show the specific Thoreau-related locus. And, if possible, please state the name and address of current owner(s).

We have a print of the Thoreau-in-Concord map by Herbert Gleason, published 1906. We expect to work further with you and Mrs. Caleb Wheeler and others in selecting loci from that map, perhaps beginning with the "pencil factory" site, also Fairhaven Cliff, etc. The Walden Pond hut site is already protected. We hope we may be notified this autumn of other loci throughout the Su-As-Co river system, dear to Thoreau; also on the Merrimack River in Massachusetts, and on Cape Cod.

Among native-born Massachusetts authors of distinction, Thoreau is almost uniquely associated with living out-of-doors, and with respect for the natural order and all natural resources. H.D.T. is the most prominent Massachusetts apostle of non-urbanism. And he is directly associated with many more scenic outdoor locations in Massachusetts than any other Massachusetts author I now know. That is why we turn to the Thoreau Society for help this summer and autumn.

The 1970 state plan write-up will be completed by Thanksgiving. Each notification to us will be acknowledged.

THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETINS REPRINTED

Issues 1 to 100 of the THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN have just been reprinted in a bound volume by the Johnson Reprint Corp., 111 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10003 for \$15.00. Although it is a facsimile reprint, in a number of cases the type has been enlarged slightly, making it more readable, and the index of the first 100 issues has been included in the back, making it a handy reference volume. Orders should be sent directly to the Johnson Reprint Corp.

ALLEN GINSBERG ON THOREAU

I recently wrote the poet Allen Ginsberg asking if I were correct in guessing from his writings and philosophy that he would feel a special affinity for Henry David Thoreau. His reply follows:

"Aug. 24, 1970

"Dear Mr. Harding

"Thoreau set first classic US example of war resistance, back to nature, tax refusal. As at the moment I'm living in country without electric on commune using 19th century techne to move water (hydraulic ram) & we're doing organic gardening, & I'm a member of the War Tax Refusal group. I find myself more & more indebted to Thoreau--particularly for his manner & remarks on being in jail--without, oddly, having very much read in his texts.

"My first association was Kerouac's association with Thoreau--both denizens of Merrimac river--& Kerouac's individualistic Dharma Bums derives in part from his appreciation of Thoreau's solitude. Kerouac was most near Thoreau when with knapsack he settled down by railroad bed or riverbottom under bridge & cooked himself some cornmeal fritters or soup.

Allen Ginsberg
R D 2 Cherry Valley
N.Y. 13320

NOTES AND QUERIES

Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's play "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail" continues to be produced by college and community groups all over the country and almost invariably to rave reviews. We have not yet had the good fortune to see a production, though we have read both the play and many of the reviews. Two thousand people were turned away from the last two performances at the University of California in Los Angeles. The Alley Theatre production in Houston has scheduled nearly fifty performances. Lawrence and Lee are now at work on a screenplay version which will be produced in 1971 by Hal Wallis, the producer of BECKETT, ANNE OF THE THOUSAND DAYS, etc.

We note here with deep regret the death of Joseph Wood Krutch who in 1948 published that invaluable critical study THOREAU published in the American Men of Letters Series.

Mrs. Marcia Moss (Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass.) asks what kind of apples Thoreau planted for Emerson in his yard. Can anyone supply an answer?

Walter Spofford writes that he found among the graffiti in a Chicago L station "Thoreau's Walled-In."

Mr. August Black of Morris, Illinois has become a life member of the Thoreau Society. Life membership is fifty dollars.

On April 14, 1970, a "Thoreau Walk" was started by thirty individuals in front of Thoreau's home in Concord--their intention to walk the twenty-five miles to the John F. Kennedy Building at the Government Center in Boston to protest Vietnam war taxes. It was their hope and expectation to be joined by many college students as they marched through Cambridge.

Andrew Jensen has pointed out to us that when in September, 1940, READER'S DIGEST ran some excerpts from Thoreau's WALDEN, they described it as "a book of which everyone has heard, but which few now read."

Quite regularly we hear from visitors to Amsterdam, Netherlands that they have seen a ship named "Henry D. Thoreau" anchored in the Amstel River. We investigated and discovered it was the home and gallery of an American artist who uses the name Viktor IV and who salvages pieces of wood floating about the Amsterdam harbor, converting them into what he calls "secular ikrons." He extends a welcome to any Thoreau Society member visiting Amsterdam to drop in and visit his gallery. The address is Opposite 49 Amstel, Amsterdam, Holland.

John LaMontaine, California composer, has been commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., to write a work for orchestra and organ for the opening season of the Center, now under construction. Theme for the composition will be taken from Thoreau's four volumes of journal selections WINTER, EARLY SPRING IN MASSACHUSETTS, SUMMER, and AUTUMN.

Peter DeVries' satirical novel THE VALE OF LAUGHTER (New York: Bantam, 1968) includes a character who wishes that his dying words would be as noble as Thoreau's, but who comes out with quite different ones when he dies in the midst of a thunderclap.

An article by Allen R. Dodd in the June 13, 1970 issue of SATURDAY REVIEW on living the simple life is entitled, "Okay, Thoreau, We Know Your're in There."

SONG FOR THOREAU'S HARVARD GRADUATION

We are indebted to Mrs. Thomas McGrath of Concord, Mass., for providing us with a copy of the Ode written by James Richardson, Jr. and sung at the Valedictory Exercises on July 18, 1837, which it is not certain that Thoreau even bothered to attend. Since the Class Supper that followed consisted of mock turtle soup, turkey, pig, oyster pies, squabs, and so on, it is not likely that Thoreau was particularly interested. It has been said that the class "celebrated its class day so vehemently in the old fashioned coarser style, that the faculty from and after that day put an extinguisher upon that kind of celebration."

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

VALEDICTORY EXERCISES OF THE SENIOR CLASS OF 1837.

TUESDAY, JULY 18, 1837.

1. Voluntary by the Band.
2. PRAYER by the Rev. Dr. Ware, Jr.
3. ORATION by Charles Hayward, Jr. — Boston.
4. Voluntary by the Band.
5. POEM by Samuel T. Hildreth. — Gloucester.
6. ODE by James Richardson, Jr. — Dedham.

TUNE. — "*Auld Lang Syne*."

A shadow steals across the sun,
And veils our morning sky ; —
A tear bedims the light of joy,
That gladdened every eye ; —

CHORUS.

The echoing tones of mirth no more
Our hearts with rapture thrill ; —
The laugh of brighter hours is hushed ; —
The festal song is still.

Dark thoughts of parting cloud each brow,
Each anxious bosom swell ;
And voices fall upon the ear,
Sad with our last farewell.

CHORUS.

Farewell ! farewell ! ye classic groves,
Farewell ! ye time-worn halls !
No more, in wisdom's soothing tones,
Our ancient Mother calls.

For the last time we gather round,
Beneath her sacred shade,
Where night and morn, for four long years,
Together we have prayed.

CHORUS.

And, ere we part, we'll breathe one prayer,
One heartfelt prayer of love,
Which, through the clouds of earthly care,
Shall waft our souls above.

Oh ! brightly may each brother's path
'Mid fadeless verdure shine !
While Pleasure's garlands softly glow
With Friendship's ray divino !

CHORUS.

We part, — and on life's ebbing sea
Though we shall meet no more, —
Oh ! may we meet, — a happier band, —
Upon a heavenly shore !

Though tears shall mingle with the smiles,
That cheer our earthly way ; —
And frowning night with threatening clouds
Obscure our little day ; —

CHORUS.

Though weary years shall us divide,
And oceans roll between ; —
Our glistening eyes shall often turn
To this our parting scene.

And often, — like the summer winds
That breathe from perfumed flowers, —
In blissful dreams, shall round us float
The forms of brighter hours.

CHORUS.

Each beaming eye, — each tone of love, —
Deep in our hearts shall dwell.
And memory long shall echo back
This last, this sad, — farewell.

Now, onward ! with the lengthening train
Of Harvard's gifted ones !
Lead on another Century
Of true and worthy sons !

CHORUS.

We part. The faltering strain must cease
That all our prayer would tell.
Each brother grasps a brother's hand,
And sighs a last — farewell.

7. BENEDICTION.